FANTASTIC STREET ARCHITECTURE.

Rigid adherence to established orders has given place of late years to a licentiousness in styles that has offended many of your correspondents. Some there are who would cling systematically to the Greek or Roman schools, whilst the majority, who are neither so austere nor scientific, prefer diversity in design, esteeming that most which exhibits lightness and novelty, even although the elements of the composition have no affinity to any thing that Palladians ever sanctioned. A new era certainly dawned on architecture, when the superficial coating of cement superseded the solid block from the quarry, and since facility, cheapness, and promptitude of construction have encouraged the vagaries of edificators who do not choose to be bound by antiquated dogmas and theories.

The disciple of the severe school is abhorrent from all imitation, intolerant of plaster, and of the mimicry that would *scribe* out coin stones or blockings: insisting on what he calls truthfulness in construction; *i. e.* that every semblable articulation should consist of a separate block. Others hold this to be too tight-laced, and that such adherence to truth would cripple and restrain the ductile imaginings of plastic genius.

Nash first broke loose: he revelled and wantoned in plaster; Regent's-park, with its terraces, are the results: he moulded statues in *false* but perennial solidity, statues still maintaining the lofty pedestals on which they have long stood candidates for the popular suffrage. Only look at Justice how she smiles from the pediment steadily holding the pendulous balance in plaster, whilst the Bath and Portland personations of the Cathedræ are *scaling* off, and fading away! A change has since been wrought in our thoroughfares; we have no more drear and dingy Harley, Wimpole, and Baker streets; diversity and lightness are now demanded in modern elevations.

The architect approves not such changes, and thinks himself the rightful arbiter in all arrangements of construction; nevertheless the taste for light, though false, exteriors is on the increase. There are amateurs in architecture whose perceptions of the beautiful are good, though not perfectly truthful; just as there are dilettanti in music who, without knowing a crotchet from a quaver, can critically appreciate an opera, and whistle over entire acts.

The increase of varied examples in architecture must lead the public mind to the study of the science, in the same manner that the establishment of a second Italian Opera has induced a more refined ear for song.

It is impossible to view the changes effected of late years in shop-fronts through the metropolis, and to maintain that we are not, in these particulars, in a state of progression. Wholesale and retail marts have arisen like temples—some of them elegant; others, it is true, ridiculous; some tawdry and gilded; some overloaded with most elaborate *imitative* carvings; others massive, dull, and heavy; but the diversity is on the whole pleasing, and tends to the improvement of general taste. There is now a strongly predominant custom of filling in the entire width of the entrance story with enormous sheets of plate glass. In some instances this impalpable material forms the *paries*, if *paries* it may be called, without any one apparent member to sustain superstructures of imposing pretensions.

In a frontage (now in the mind's eye), not far from St. Paul's, over an *invisible* base of this description, is erected a façade, surmounted by a balustrade, then a pediment, next in descending order a plastered story, highly enriched with medallions of cupids, sustaining *antediluvian shells*,—then a piano nobile displaying columns, and perhaps the order of "*Fenestration*" recommended by the critical commentator of The Builder's late number; the line of balconies resting on a wreath of roses, extensive enough for a triumphal arch, the leaves and flowrets whereof naturally enough depend from their stems, and as in the growing state hang in air, and seem to rest upon nothing!

Those who are up to the secret know that there is a breastsummer concealed behind the foliage, but all is void to the eye, save the two side houses, in cohesion with which the entire elevation seems to depend, and the effect is necessarily unsatisfactory.

An insurance company has started to protect the spirited proprietors of establishments with 500*l.* panes: it is high time that some speculators should be provident when others are lavish; but there is yet a danger unprotected, and perhaps unforeseen, in the event of an accident, that in a hurrying crowd one should be pushed against the brittle panes: that a matutinal tiler should stagger against it; or that even a smasher (anxious for the good luck of transportation), should viciously assail it with a weighted hand: where is the security for life or limb of those passing under the fall of half a ton weight of glass? gravitating edgewise on the unfortunate delinquent, he must be infallibly beheaded or dicotomised!

Plate-glass vendors are right in holding the mirror up to nature; but they should guard their splendour by a slight trellice (excuse the *raillery*), for in the event of an accident it might turn out that more than one defaulter had a glass too much. Quondam.

IRISH WORKS.

The interior decorations of the R. C. Church, in High-street, Dublin, are nearly completed. A range of Corinthian antæ, surmounted by an enriched entablature, and with semi-circular pseudo-arches in the inter-columns, is continued round the building. Light is obtained through Diocletian windows over the entablature. The expenditure on the new decorations will be about 2,000*l.* Mr. P. Byrne, architect: Mr. Buckley, plasterer.

A large monastery is in progress of erection at Killarney.

Since 1844 the sums annually expended upon Lough Neagh drainage amount to 114,748*l.*

The Church of Saint Mathias, at Dublin, is being enlarged, and new transepts built thereto. Mr. Louch, architect.

A new masonic hall is to be erected at Armagh, and Lord Dungannon has subscribed 10*l.*

The Boyne Commissioners purpose proceeding with the harbour works at Drogheda, and are negotiating a loan of 15,000*l.* with the Belfast Banking Company.

A new chapel school is to be built by the Board of Ordnance at Fermoy Barracks, similar to those described by us in a previous number.

It is proposed to connect Galway, Tuam, Holymount, Castlebar, and Ballina by means of a trunk line, with branches, to Ballinrobe and Westport.

Steps are being taken for the advancement of the railway to Foynes. The Waterford and Limerick Company have taken 700 shares, the Great Southern and Western 600, Mr. Dargan 1,300, and Lord Monteagle 100, besides some others. We believe Mr. Dargan will be the contractor, and that he has undertaken to have the line finished and opened in eight months after its commencement.

At Galway it is in contemplation to open a continuation of the new street at Williams'-gate, and have a direct line between the docks and the Wood-quay. The street architecture is improving. New shop fronts are being erected, and the Messrs. Farquharson's building is conspicuous.

A commission of inquiry into the state of the markets through Ireland has been issued by the Lord-Lieutenant. The commissioners have been making a tour of the northern counties, and it is to be hoped that their report will be the means of causing improvement, the generality of the town being, in point of market accommodation, in a wretched state.

The Dublin Palace of Industry is progressing. Eighty carpenters are at work, and the total number of men employed is 170. The trellis girders, weighing eight tons each, are nearly all completed: they consist of ten layers of plank, 2 inches thick, connected by struts, bound securely together with screws and bolts. Windlasses, for the purpose of raising them to their destined position, are in course of construction. Abutments, for the support of columns, which are to form nave and aisles, have been built to the required level, and the first column will shortly be elevated in presence of his Excellency the Earl of Eglinton. The wrought-iron girders, manufactured by Mr. Turner, of Hammersmith, have been tested by Mr. Fairbairn, C.E. and a deflection of 1 ¼ took place under a weight of 32 tons, which being removed, they resumed their place to within ¼ of an inch. None of the columns have yet arrived, but we were informed they are expected shortly. It is in contemplation to throw a light bridge across the road into Merrion-square, to use the latter as a promenade.

The Commissioners of National Education purpose building an agricultural school and model-farm in the vicinity of Cork. The sum required (4,000*l.*) has been promised by Government.

A new R.C. Church is nearly finished at Glan, county Galway. It is built on a small hill overlooking Lough Corrib.

The new R.C. Church at Ballinasloe is progressing, under the direction of Mr. McCarthy, architect. The walls of superstructure are at present several feet high; style, Gothic.

The Killarney Junction Railway Company have received a number of plans in competition for their large hotel. One premium of 50*l.* has been offered.

The Limerick Chapel competition is not decided yet. We should say that the committee have had more than "*ample*" time to make up their minds.

THE PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

THE GROVES OF BROMPTON

We are informed that the Royal Commissioners have purchased that portion of the Harrington estate in Old Brompton which, in a recent division, was allotted to the trustees of the Baroness De Graffenried Villars, namely 47½ acres, for the sum of 150,000*l.* The land is subject to a charge of 1*l.* a-year for the alms house inhabitants, and 1*l.* per annum for the Good Fellows Charity. This affords an instance of the rise in the value of land here, and we could give others even more striking. Some eight years since, the whole estate, about 94 acres, was valued at 95,000*l.* by Mr. R. L. Jones.

The conversion of the Brompton Groves, with all their fine old poplar, elm, walnut, chesnut, beech, and orchard trees, into classical groves of learning in art and science as well as into an exoteric or surrounding area of pleasure gardens for the people, would be a boon. The reservation of this space from being forthwith entirely covered with brick and mortar, as it is assuredly destined, otherwise, to be, would be a compensation for the slices which have already been filched from the parks at the West-end, and remorselessly built upon. It ought specially to be noted that the Brompton Groves constitute an open space nearer by a long way to the centre of the great mass of the metropolis than any other open space still left in private hands and ready to be built upon. Hence its peculiar adaptation as a site for the proposed Industrial University; and hence too the great desirability of reserving it as an open breathing space for the multitude, or at least as an oxygen manufactory and a foul air consumer, even were it to be altogether shut up from the people at large, and entirely devoted—grounds as well as buildings—to the industrial and other students, who will walk in its groves.

Noble Lecturers.—On Thursday in last week, the Earl of Ellesmere delivered at Worsley a lecture to the members of the local library and reading-room, on the "Life and Character of the late Duke of Wellington." Lord Cawdor and other visitors and members of his lordship's family were present.——At a recent meeting of the Bury Mechanics' Institute, the Hon. and Rev. Lord Arthur Harvey delivered a lecture to the members on "History."

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